

ABSTRACT

- Title:** Barefoot hiking in the Czech Republic
- Objectives:** The aim of this work is to assess the possibilities and position of barefoot hiking in the Czech Republic.
- Methods:** The research part of the work is divided into two parts in order to meet the objectives. The first is to determine the impacts of barefoot hiking on human health and to describe the profile of a barefoot hiker using a questionnaire survey. The research lasted 11 weeks and involved 230 respondents, of which 147 (64%) are active barefoot tourists and 83 (36%) are respondents who are only interested in barefoot hiking. Secondly, two semi-structured interviews were conducted - with a barefoot physiotherapist about the effects of barefoot hiking on human health and with a barefoot walking methodology specialist about the development and position of this form of hiking.
- Results:** 64 % of the addressed barefoot hikers experience an overall improvement in health in connection with barefoot hiking. 63 % of the surveyed barefoot tourists put on shoes due to the cold only at temperatures below 10 °C. 13% even only at temperatures below -5 °C. 67 % of the interviewed barefoot hikers prefer the length of barefoot trips up to 10 km. 78% of the addressed barefoot hikers engage in barefoot hiking only individually (not within any club). 53 % of the surveyed barefoot hikers combine barefoot walking with using barefoot shoes. 93 % of the respondents who described the surface of the forest road as unpleasant do not actively engage in barefoot hiking. On the contrary, 89 % of the respondents who described the surface of the forest road as excellent are active barefoot hikers. The interviews highlighted the benefits of barefoot walking and hiking and their growing popularity.
- Conclusion:** We have found that, with the exception of specific health contraindications, barefoot hiking appears to be a healthy activity, which is also confirmed by interviews with experts. The questionnaire shows that most barefoot hikers feel better thanks to this form of hiking, they

are also more resistant to cold temperatures than the general population and are not hypersensitive to walking barefoot on various surfaces.

Keywords: Barefoot hiking, walking, outdoor activities, Czech Tourist Club, KCT